

# This Week In Agriculture

December 16, 2005

## January 2006

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## Upcoming events

Leadership Idaho Agriculture Class 26 meets in Twin Falls Jan. 2-5.

Northwest Direct Seed Cropping Systems Conference and Equipment Show at the Three Rivers Convention Center, Kennewick, Washington, Jan. 5-6. Call (509) 783-4676 for more info.

Governor Dirk Kempthorne gives his State of the State address to kick off the 2006 legislative session, Jan. 9.

ICIE Natural Resource Legislative Briefing. Gold Room, 4th floor of the Statehouse, Jan. 9. Call Pat Barclay for more info at 336-8508.

33rd Annual Fertilizer and Chemical Conference in Jackpot, Nevada, Jan. 9-11. Call (208) 886-2406.

Thanks to Food Producers of Idaho for meeting information. Send your events to [rmason@idahoag.us](mailto:rmason@idahoag.us).

## Commissions return with big news from Mexico

Officials from the Idaho Potato Commission and the Idaho Bean Commission say they scored major victories during Governor Dirk Kempthorne's trade mission to Mexico.

"One objective of the trade mission was to build opportunities for Idaho agriculture," Governor Dirk Kempthorne said. "I'm pleased to report that objective was met. Idaho agriculture and the state's economy will benefit from the meetings we held and the relationships we strengthened while in Mexico."

"Once again, Governor Kempthorne led a successful trade mission that will benefit Idahoans immediately and for years to come," Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi said.

Mexico's Department of Agriculture agreed to examine ways to expand to new Mexican states the test plots for Idaho bean seed. Bean Commission members call the development a win-win for Idaho growers as well as for Mexican farmers.

"Idaho seeds produce a higher quality product. This will result in a greatly-expanded market for Idaho-grown bean seed, and it will mean a better product for the Mexican consumer and more income for Mexican farmers," said Idaho Bean Commission Chairman Leonard Andrew. "This agreement with Mexico's Department of Agriculture will be a big help to making these test plots become a reality. This is exactly what we were wanting from this trade mission, and we owe a great deal



Governor Kempthorne, Mexican TV personality Lulu Pedraza and Boise Chef Christian Lamotte tape a cooking show featuring Idaho products.

to Governor Dirk Kempthorne for making it possible."

Governor Kempthorne and Idaho trade delegation members met with Mexico's new Secretary of Agriculture, Francisco Mayorga.

Mayorga agreed to work with U.S. officials to improve the protocol for states that want to ship fresh potatoes to Mexico. Currently, fresh potatoes can't be shipped more than 26 kilometers south of the U.S. border.

Secretary Mayorga discussed with Kempthorne ways to remove the trade restrictions.

"The trip was extraordinary," said Seth Pemsler, vice president of retail for the Idaho Potato Commission. "It opened the doors of all the major retailers we've been targeting as well as the Secretary of Agriculture."

"All of these opportunities would have been limited had this trade mission not occurred."

Pemsler said the trade mission was a good opportunity to interact with other state agencies and businesses "to be sure that we're aligned, that we're coordinated and that we're leveraging."

### Francis Field to lead House Agriculture Committee

House Speaker Bruce Newcomb has named Frances Field of Grand View chairman of the House of the Agricultural Affairs Committee. Tom Trail of Moscow will remain vice chairman. Darrell Bolz of Caldwell will take Field's place as vice chair of the House Appropriations Committee. Frank Henderson of Post Falls also joins the budget panel.

## News from ISDA

Dr. Greg Ledbetter is the new Division of Animal Industries interim administrator/state veterinarian.

"Dr. Ledbetter is well known and well-regarded for his leadership in livestock and environmental issues," Director Pat Takasugi said. Ledbetter was raised on a cattle ranch then went on to receive his DVM degree and a Masters in Preventive Veterinary Medicine.

"After 28 years in the private sector, I'm excited about the opportunity to work within the state government to serve the livestock industry and the people of Idaho" Dr. Ledbetter said.

Lacey Menasco has joined the Marketing Division as a Marketing Analyst.

Lacey grew up on a large cattle operation in northern Nevada where she spent her summers working horseback along side her father and working on her 4-H projects.

Lacy has a Bachelor's Degree in Agribusiness and a Master's Degree in Agricultural Economics.

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## Grants available for new market opportunities

Idaho agriculture organizations seeking to explore new market opportunities for food and agriculture products may apply for funding through the Idaho State Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Federal-State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP).

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture is seeking partnerships with eligible organizations to submit grant proposals.

FSMIP grants may be requested for a wide range of marketing research or projects aimed at exploring new market opportunities for agricul-

tural products or improving the efficiency and performance of food marketing systems.

Although all eligible proposals will be considered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, special attention will be given to proposals that address regional or national issues, and address challenges in the following areas: market analysis, transportation and distribution, competitiveness and new markets, and food quality and variety.

Grants must be matched by the cooperating organizations and can be used for a wide range of marketing research and marketing activities.

Grants cannot be used for advertising and promotion, construction of facilities or political activities.

The application deadline for FY 2006 is February 11, 2006, and proposals must be submitted to the Idaho State Department of Agriculture by January 31, 2006, for consideration. Program guidelines can be obtained by visiting [www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/fsmip.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/tmd/fsmip.htm).

For more information contact Lacey Menasco, Idaho State Department of Agriculture, at (208) 332-8538 or [lmenasco@idahoag.us](mailto:lmenasco@idahoag.us).

## USDA board approves changes to insurance plan

USDA's Federal Crop Insurance Corporation (FCIC) Board of Directors recently approved program enhancements to the Adjusted Gross Revenue Pilot (AGR) and AGR Lite plans of insurance.

AGR and AGR Lite products provide revenue protection against low returns due to unavoidable natural disasters and market fluctuations that affect income from commodi-

ties produced during the insurance year. As a streamlined whole-farm revenue protection package, AGR and AGR Lite can be used as a stand-alone coverage or in addition to other individual crop insurance policies.

The most significant change for 2006 is the increase in the maximum AGR-Lite coverage from \$250,000 to \$1 million. With this change, many more

producers in the region are now able to consider this innovative new insurance plan. The AGR Lite sales closing date was extended to March 15.

This means the final date to apply for AGR Lite coverage for 2006, is March 15, 2006. January 31, 2006 continues to be the signup deadline for AGR (Pilot).

## UI extension offers food preparation tips

It's the time of year when friends and family gather around the table. But Sandy McCurdy, University of Idaho Extension food safety specialist, is offering important safety tips so your dinner guests don't get sick:

When preparing large quantities of appetizers like small sandwiches or stuffed creampuffs, take only a portion of the ingredients at a time out of the refrigerator.

Don't set large bowls of perishable ingredients on the countertop while you're working.

Never let perishable items stay in the "danger zone" between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 2 hours.

If you anticipate that foods will be offered on a buffet table for 3 to 4 hours, devise ways to keep cold foods cold

on a bed of ice and hot foods hot on a warming tray or chafing dish. Or, replace portions every 2 hours, discarding the previously displayed perishables.

When thawing large meats, allow one day of thawing time in the refrigerator for every 5 pounds. While it's thawing, place the meat in a container so it won't drip on other items.